

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) An image coding apparatus comprising:

a coding circuit which codes an image signal to be coded, by using intra-frame coding scheme and/or inter-frame coding scheme; and

a reference mode selection circuit which sets selectively either a reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding in which a past frame and a future frame are referred to or a reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, as the inter-frame coding scheme, according to a table associating a first resolution of an image with one of the reference modes and a second resolution of an image with the other reference mode, the table varying based on an coding execution environment in said apparatus, the second resolution being higher than the first resolution,

wherein said reference mode selection circuit obtains image resolution information, and referring to the table, sets the reference mode that uses the bidirectional coding when an image represented by the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the first resolution, and sets the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding when the image represented by the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the second resolution, ~~which is higher than the first resolution~~

said coding circuit codes the image signal by using a scheme complying with MPEG,

in the reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding, the coding is performed using I pictures, P pictures and B pictures, and

in the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, I pictures and P pictures are used.

3. (Currently amended) An image coding apparatus comprising:

a coding circuit which codes an image signal to be coded, by using intra-frame coding scheme and/or inter-frame coding scheme; and

a reference mode selection circuit which sets selectively either a reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding in which a past frame and a future frame are referred to or a reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, as the inter-frame coding scheme, according to a table associating a first frame rate with one of the reference modes and a second frame rate with the other reference mode, the table varying based on an coding execution environment in said apparatus, the second frame rate being lower than the first frame rate,

wherein said reference mode selection circuit obtains frame rate information, and referring to the table, sets the reference mode that uses the bidirectional coding when the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the first frame rate, and sets the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding when the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the second frame rate, ~~which is lower than the first frame rate~~

said coding circuit codes the image signal by using a scheme complying with MPEG,
in the reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding, the coding is performed using I pictures, P pictures and B pictures, and

in the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, I pictures and P pictures are used.

4. (Currently amended) An image coding apparatus comprising:

a coding circuit which codes an image signal to be coded, by using intra-frame coding scheme and/or inter-frame coding scheme; and

a reference mode selection circuit which sets selectively either a reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding in which a past frame and a future frame are referred to or a reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, as the inter-frame coding scheme, according to a table associating a first bit rate with one of the reference modes and a second bit rate with the other reference mode, the table varying based on an coding execution environment in said apparatus, the second bit rate being higher than the first bit rate,

wherein said reference mode selection circuit obtains bit rate information, and referring to the table, sets the reference mode that uses the bidirectional coding when a bit rate of transferring the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the first bit rate, and sets the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding when the bit rate of transferring the image signal to be coded has [[a]] the second bit rate, which is higher than the first rate

said coding circuit codes the image signal by using a scheme complying with MPEG, in the reference mode that uses a bidirectional coding, the coding is performed using I pictures, P pictures and B pictures, and

in the reference mode that does not use the bidirectional coding, I pictures and P pictures are used.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) An image pickup apparatus, comprising:
an image input unit which takes an image of an object and acquires an image signal;
an image coding apparatus according to Claim 2, which codes the image signal; and
a data storage unit which stores coded data generated by the coding.

Claims 7-28. (Canceled)